LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1271 - Caged Battle Royale

Chapter 1271: Caged Battle Royale

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"Caged battle royale?"

Hearing the theme of the secondary selection, the candidates widened their eyes in astonishment.

They had heard of caged battle royale before, and they understood the significance behind it as well.

In ancient times, when the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was still the dominant power in the Master Teacher Continent, they would often conduct caged battle royales to entertain themselves.

To put it in simple terms, caged battle royale consisted of placing a group of men in the same cage and leaving them to fight it out amongst themselves. The last one standing would be spared, and the rest would become sacrifices for his survival. It was an extremely brutal event, testing of a human's true nature.

For their own survival, there were those who would even lay their hands on their kin or even their own children… Such practice had been considered to be vile by mankind, spurned by the Master Teacher Pavilion, so why would the Sanctum of Sages use it in their secondary selections?

"Don't worry, the caged battle royale won't be a slaughter but an elimination match!" Noticing that everyone's expression was growing unnatural, Zhao Xingmo waved his hand and explained, "We'll be placing you in an isolated island, and within three days, you must find and eliminate thirteen amongst you in order to clear the examination. Of course, the method of elimination will not be killing the individual but breaking his allocated jade token. If we were to find that you have willfully killed any one of the candidates, your candidacy will be stripped immediately!"

"Breaking allocated jade tokens?"

"This will be difficult…"

Grave expressions appeared on the faces around.

They were all top-notch geniuses, and while there was some disparity in their strength, each of them wielded exceptional life preservation and escape means. If it was just a normal battle royale, they would still be able to eliminate other candidates through springing surprise assaults and swiftly incapacitating their enemy. However, if they had to break the jade token without endangering the other party's life, the difficulty would be hiked up significantly!

"Of course, you aren't the only ones on the isolated island too. There will be saint beasts, traps prepared in advance, and treacherous terrains… While trying to eliminate others,

you will have to try your best to protect yourself as well!”

A glint flashed across Zhao Xingmo’s eyes before he continued, “Just a warning in advance, if you think that you can just hide at one corner and wait for others to be eliminated, let me make this clear right now. You will be forcefully eliminated by me as well. The Sanctum of Sages needs no cowards and escapees! Also, if you all were to fail to eliminate thirteen people within three days, everyone shall lose their candidacy!”

“This…”

“In other words, we have to eliminate others or else we won’t be able to get into the Sanctum of Sages even if we were to last till the end?”

“This is too difficult!”

“Well, if it’s that easy to enroll into the number one academy of the Master Teacher Continent, it would surely be overflowing with freshmen each year!”

…

After a moment of commotion, everyone fell silent.

While the rules of the caged battle royale may seem simple, it was actually far more demanding than being literally placed into a cage.

It wasn't just a simple battle royale anymore. It was demanding on one's overall capabilities, be it planning, analyzing the situation, tracking, danger sensing, and much more.

As expected of the selection of the Sanctum of Sages, its difficulty was indeed at a different level.

"These are your jade tokens, they represent each of your identities. You can choose to carry it with you, hide it, or anything else. The only condition is that the jade token must remain on the island. As long as your jade token isn't shattered, that would mean that you aren't eliminated yet!" Zhao Xingmo said as he flicked his wrist, and more than thirty jade tokens flew toward the crowd.

"The jade tokens can be hidden as well?"

"In other words… even if we were to successfully capture others, as long as we can't find the other party's jade token, there's nothing we can do at all?"

"As long as we can't find the jade token, there's nothing we can do to eliminate a candidate… But how in the world are we supposed to find a jade token that can be hidden anywhere on an isolated island?"

…

The crowd was stunned once more. They could hardly believe what they were hearing.

If the rules enforced that the jade token must remain on one's body, after defeating an opponent, they would at least be able to search the other party's body and destroy his jade token. On the other hand, if the hiding of jade tokens were to be permitted as well, even if they were to successfully track down and subdue an opponent, there would be nothing they could do to eliminate him if he didn't have his jade token on him!

In the first place, eliminating an opponent through jade tokens had already hiked up the difficulty considerably. Now that the hiding of jade tokens was allowed as well, the

difficulty would be increased to at least tenfold of before.

This is also a test of one's state of mind! In contrast to the shocked faces around him, a gleam flashed across Zhang Xuan's eyes.

Perhaps it was because he wasn't as pressured to enter the Sanctum of Sages as compared to the others, from a bystander's point of view, he was able to see through the crux of the rules in an instant.

Zhao Xingmo had intentionally said that they could hide the jade token, but to be honest, where else could be safer than with keeping it with oneself?

To hide one's jade token was as good as leaving one's fate to luck, gambling on whether the others would be able to find his jade token or not. If a person couldn't even trust himself enough to guard his jade token himself, it was likely that he was lacking in certain necessary traits that a leader of mankind should have.

Most likely, such an action would result in a huge penalty of some kind.

But of course, he wouldn't go so far as to remind the others of this matter. Stretching his hand forward, he grabbed the jade token flying toward him lightly.

It was a specially forged black jade. Carved on the back of the jade token was his name whereas the front was inscribed with a peculiar kind of pattern. The pattern seemed to grant the jade token a communication function that would allow Zhao Xingmo to determine whether a candidate had been eliminated or not.

"Zhao shi, if someone were to utilize artifacts beyond our prowess in the secondary selection, wouldn't we stand no chance at all?" a genius from Qianchong Empire, Ma Minghai, asked.

Hearing those words, everyone's sights swiftly turned to Zhang Xuan.

Yesterday, that fellow threw out more than a hundred puppets and pummeled the Half-Grand Dominion realm Pavilion Master Yue with ease. If those puppets were to be used against them, they wouldn't stand a chance at all.

"In the caged battle royale, out of concerns over fairness, no candidate is to use any weapon or artifact to execute any actions that would directly or indirectly lead to the elimination of a candidate. Anyone who flouts this rule will be eliminated without exception!" Zhao Xingmo declared.

"That's good…"

The crowd heaved a sigh of relief.

As long as weapons and artifacts weren't allowed, even if Zhang Xuan possessed superior fighting prowess, there was no need to fear him!

While they might not have been able to defeat him face-to-face, but they would at least still be able to use their life preservation methods to flee from him.

"Is there any other questions?"

"Zhao shi, may I enquire where the isolated island will be? Roughly how big would it be? Also, regarding the traps and saint beasts you spoke of, how strong would they be?" a master teacher asked.

“These are secrets. You will have figure those out yourself after arriving at the location. Alright, if there are no other questions, we shall set off right now. Oh right, you aren’t allowed to utilize remote communication artifacts to communicate with one another either. Anyone caught doing so will be eliminated as well!”

Zhao Xingmo warned strictly, “Don’t even dream of cheating or attempting to exploit loopholes in the rules. Since I dare to set these rules, I have my own way of keeping a lookout and enforcing them.”

“Yes!”

The candidates nodded.

Seeing that everyone had understood the rules, Zhao Xingmo decided to say no more. He turned to Pavilion Master Yue and said, “Pavilion Master Yue, send them off.”

“Un.” Pavilion Master Yue nodded before raising his hand.

In the next moment, over thirty aerial saint beasts descended to the ground. There was a cultivator on each of them, and they passed a blindfold over to the candidates, gesturing

for them to put them on before leading them to the back of the saint beast.

This blindfold was similar to the one Zhang Xuan had worn prior to being led to the black market. Once put on, not only was one's sight impeded, even one's Spiritual Perception would be severely limited as well. Under the lead of the cultivators, the candidates soon heard a resounding call before the saint beasts soared into the sky.

After flying for some time, Zhang Xuan suddenly felt his feet stepping on solid ground once more. Tearing away his blindfold, he soon realized that he was standing in the midst of a dense forest. His surroundings were completely silent, and there was not a single person to be seen.

It seemed like the purpose of covering their eyes wasn't just to keep the location where they were heading to a mystery, more importantly, it was also to prevent them to finding their comrades easily and teaming up.

As such, each person would have to depend on himself for most part of the selection.

Zhang Jiuxiao did make substantial advancement in his cultivation, reaching Primordial Spirit realm advanced stage. On top of that, after my guidance along the way, his combat skills have also visibly improved as well… As long as he doesn't encounter Ma Minghai and the others, he should still be able to cope.

Admittedly, Zhang Jiuxiao's fighting prowess was still far lacking as compared to Zhang Xuan, but no matter what, he was still an offspring from a powerful clan, and he had received Zhang Xuan's guidance as well… As long as he didn't meet with enemies that were too powerful, he should be able to deal with them with relative ease. At the very least, escaping shouldn't be a problem.

Deciding not to think too much into it, Zhang Xuan leaped onto a nearby tree branch to assess his surroundings, only to find that the forest extended far into the horizon. Rather than a remote island, he seemed to be in the depths of a mountain range instead.

Is this really an isolated island? This is really way too big… Zhang Xuan thought in astonishment.

To be unable to see the other end even with his current strength, just how big could the island be?

A thousand li? Two thousand li? Or six thousand li? [1]

To find the other thirty or so candidates on an island this big and eliminate them within three days… the selection really wasn't as easy as he thought.

It seemed like knowing how to track the other candidates was also one of the aspects of assessment.

But considering the size of the island, how can Zhao shi keep a tight watch over what's happening everywhere to enforce his rules? Leaping back to the ground, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but wonder.

Despite having cultivated the Heaven's Path Divine Art, his Spiritual Perception was still limited to a radius of roughly 2500 meters. Ordinary cultivators would only be at around 400 meters or so. Given how large the island was, even if Zhao Xingmo was a Grand Dominion realm expert, it was really hard to believe that he would be able to keep a tight watch over everything that was happening on the island at every moment.

Forget it, there's no point thinking about that now. What's the most important at the moment is to find other candidates and eliminate them… Unable to figure out the matter, Zhang Xuan decided not to think too much into it as well.

With his recent breakthroughs, even without a weapon in hand, he would still be able to rival Grand Dominion realm primary stage cultivators. With such fighting prowess, he would be able to eliminate any candidate he encountered without any problem. The ones who should be shivering in fear were his opponents instead.

Zhang Xuan walked along the mountain range for a while, but he soon realized that roaming around aimlessly in such a manner was likely to end in futility. The chances were that he wouldn't be able to find a single person even if he were to walk like this for an entire day. Thus, he flicked his wrist and took out a compass.

As a formation master, a compass was a necessary tool. Even though Zhang Xuan had never really used it before—he had never found the need to do so—he still stored a few of them in his storage ring, and they were of decent quality as well.

The spiritual energy is more concentrated in that direction… It seems like the center of the island should be in that direction. I should head over to take a look! After determining a direction, Zhang Xuan began flitting forward on the ground.

He didn't choose to fly for several reasons. Firstly, the area was filled with saint beasts, so he might end up becoming a target if he were to rise to the air. Secondly, he would also attract the attention of the other candidates. Even if he had no fear with his current strength, he still had no intention of being too high profile.

Roar!

After advancing some distance away, a furious howl suddenly sounded. Following which, Zhang Xuan saw a massive Tigerbone Beast charging in his direction.

Just like him, the Tigerbone Beast was at Primordial Spirit realm as well. Even before its approach, one could already feel the authoritative pressure that it commanded weighing down on one's soul, as if it would crush one with ease.

Its body is pretty valuable… Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

The saint beasts should already be thankful that he wasn't seeking any trouble with them, but this fellow actually still dared to charge over. Since that was the case, he had no intention of holding back either. He raised his palm and crushed it downward.

Paji!

The body of the Tigerbone Beast abruptly froze, as if someone had sealed it in place. Fear and horror crept into its massive eyes.

"You only have your own recklessness to blame…" Zhang Xuan muttered impassively as he bent his finger backward, preparing to flick the Tigerbone Beast to death and extract its valuable body parts.

In that moment, the sky suddenly trembled, and a deafening voice sounded.

"Zhang Jiuxiao's jade token has been shattered. The first candidate has been eliminated. Remaining candidates: 32!"

What? Zhang Jiuxiao has been eliminated?

Startled, a look of disbelief slowly crept onto Zhang Xuan's face.

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